



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

VALERIE ERVIN  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 5

**Memorandum**

November 7, 2013

To: Nancy Navarro, President, Montgomery County Council  
Roger Berliner, Chair, Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee

From: Valerie Ervin, Councilmember – District 5

**Re: Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan**

The Washington metropolitan region's traffic problems are well documented, and Montgomery County is no exception. We all know that to plan for the quality of life that our residents expect and deserve, we cannot accept the status quo. That is why we have all embraced the smart growth principles of transit-oriented development; approved the Purple Line Functional Plan in 2010; advocated for transit in correspondence to our State Delegation; fought against cuts to Ride On during the recession; incentivized non-automotive modes of transportation; expressed our commitment to continuing to make our county safe and friendly for pedestrians and bicyclists; and recently launched the County's bikeshare program.

The County Council is scheduled to take up yet another measure proposed to address the county's transportation issues: the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. The plan is both forward-thinking and ambitious. However, it has also raised a great deal of interest and concern in the community, as evidenced by the amount of correspondence and testimony from the public, and the fact that every councilmember has attended at least one Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment (T&E) Committee worksession on the plan. I appreciate the hard work of Planning Department staff, as well as the T&E Committee Chair's leadership, who has done an excellent job clarifying the scope and methodically working through this draft plan.

As the Council's representative on the County's Pedestrian, Bicycle and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, I especially appreciate the designation of additional Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Areas, which will promote better accommodation of non-automotive modes of transportation and increase safety. In addition, I recognize how interconnected improved transit is to our land use decisions. Several master/sector plans, including the approved Great Seneca Science Corridor and White Flint plans, as well as the Planning Board's Draft White Oak Science Gateway Plan, include recommendations about rapid transit.

I am a strong advocate for mass transit improvements and building the infrastructure that the County needs for its future, but this needs to be accomplished in a way that does not adversely impact residents' quality of life. When the full County Council begins its work on the plan, I would like to ensure that the questions and concerns of our residents are addressed before any formal action is taken. Specifically, I would especially the following issues addressed:

- What is the ultimate goal of this plan? We should be clear about whether we are truly implementing a rapid transit system on dedicated lanes with fewer stations, or whether this is an enhanced version of Ride On that will run in mixed traffic.
- Despite a strong car culture in Montgomery County, thousands of our county residents depend on Ride On and other forms of transit to get to their destinations today. While we must envision bold ideas for our future, we also have a duty to ensure that sufficient energy and resources are devoted to sustaining and improving the existing transportation infrastructure. To what extent has an enhanced version of our existing transit system been analyzed? Given that this proposed plan is a long-term vision, how can the County implement aspects of this plan in the near-term to improve transit, such faster boarding and improved station shelters?
- Clearly, this plan will set future public expectations. While not part of the scope of the plan itself, it is necessary to have a conversation about how we will fund this proposed plan. When will the Executive Branch make funding recommendations?
- Assuming that the State will have to concur with any decision made by the County, what feedback have we received from the State regarding this plan?
- How will the Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Areas ensure both pedestrian safety and vehicle mobility in constrained environments, such as Four Corners in Silver Spring?
- There are a few corridors/routes, such as Veirs Mill Road and the Corridor Cities Transitway, that are either already designated or are in project planning. If approved, what order will the other corridors be implemented? How will this sequencing be determined?
- Please clarify future opportunities for resident involvement in the planning and implementation for transit corridors, stations and/or other potential treatments in the right-of-way.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact my office at 240-777-7960.

c: Councilmembers  
Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive  
Timothy Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer  
Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director, Department of Transportation  
Glenn Orlin, Deputy Administrator, Council Staff  
Marlene Michaelson, Council Staff